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AS PASTOR OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

AND SOCIETY,

IN THE CITY OF BOSTON,

MAY 13, 1824,

BY RUSSELL STREETER,

MINISTER OF THE UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY IN PORTLAND.

BOSTON.

PRINTED BY HENRY BOWEN, NO. 4,

PROVINCE-HOUSE ROW.

1824.

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BOSTON, MAY 14, 1824.

DEAR SIR,

Having been appointed a Committee, by the first Universalist Society in Boston, to express their gratitude to you for your interesting and truly Christian Sermon, which you delivered before them yesterday, we have the happiness of soliciting, in Behalf of said Society, a Copy for publication.

With Respect,

Your Obedient Servants

ROBERT BACON,
ELIJAH CLARK,
SIMON WILKINSON,
COMMITTEE.

REV. RUSSELL STREETER.

BOSTON, MAY 14, 1824.

GENTLEMEN,

You will accept my acknowledgments for your polite Note of this morning. Venerating the source from which proceeded the request it contained, I will comply with your Solicitation, as soon as convenient.

With Sentiments of Esteem,

I am Your's, RUSSELL STREETER.

Messrs. ROBERT BACON,
ELIJAH CLARK,
SIMON WILKINSON
COMMITTEE.

SERMON.

Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament ; not of the letter, but of the spirit ; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.—2 Cor. iii. 6.

INTRODUCTORY to the passage now proposed for consideration, I will recite the connexion in which it is found, as the best means of preparing your minds for the important and interesting sentiments which it contains.—“ Do we begin again to commend ourselves ? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you ? Ye are our epistle *written in our hearts*, known and read of all men : manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone ; but in fleshly tables of the heart. And such confidence have we through Christ to God-ward. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God ; Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament ; not of the letter, but of the spirit ; for the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life. For if the *ministration of death*, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance ; which glory was to be done away : how shall not the *ministration of the spirit be rather glorious* ? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, *much more* doth the ministra-

tion of righteousness *exceed* in glory. For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory which excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, *much more* that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, so that the children could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil, untaken away in reading the Old Testament: which veil is done away in Christ;” or the New Testament, the Gospel Dispensation.

Having introduced our subject in the apostle’s own words, we shall attempt its discussion under the following general divisions:

- i. Exhibit some of the characteristics and qualifications of ministers of the New Testament.
- ii. State the fundamental principles of the doctrine which they preach.
- iii. Make some remarks illustrative of the natural tendency of this New Testament religion, when correctly inculcated and understandingly embraced.

i. *The characteristics and qualifications of christian ministers.*—It should in this place be particularly observed, that by “ministers of the New Testament,” we mean those, who are *ordinarily* called to labor in word and doctrine, as well as those who were commissioned of the Lord, in an *extraordinary* and *supernatural* manner. We offer this explanation, that you may know we do not make pretensions to gifts and qualifications, which were peculiar to those who taught in the *age of miracles*. And even at that time, there were some, we have reason to believe, who were not qualified to be instrumental in miraculous operations upon the human mind. Even for the primitive establishment of Christianity, men were appointed to different offices in the

various departments of Christ's government. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets; thirdly teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing?" We consider it presumptive and arrogant for christian teachers now to make pretensions to those supernatural endowments, by which apostles, prophets and interpreters, became infallible witnesses to the truth of the doctrine which they proclaimed. To evince the justness of such pretensions, we should be under obligations to attest our doctrine by an efficacious display of miraculous powers. For though it is admitted that some men have been *instantaneously* converted and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, we do not believe it is God's ordinary method of conversion and sanctification. Those copious out-pourings—the sudden and mighty operations of the divine spirit, of which we have accounts in Scripture, were as *really miraculous*, as the restoration of a withered hand or the resurrection of the dead. The one was as great a departure from the usual methods of sanctification, as the others were from the established course of nature. Hence we cannot conscientiously pretend to be so much as *humbly instrumental*, in a kind of conversion which is really miraculous. The days of miracles being now past, we labor to bring men from darkness to light, and convert them from sin to holiness, by the appointed means of religious instruction and persuasion, or by teaching them to observe all things which Jesus has commanded in the Scriptures. Therefore, we may observe under this division of the subject,

1. That **MEEKNESS** and **HUMILITY** are necessary characteristics in a christian minister. The preacher of this description will be religiously and earnestly

desirous of rendering himself useful to others, and act from an humble and heart-felt sense of his dependence on God for matter, gifts and graces, in proclaiming the glorious gospel of His Son. He will go forth, "In *meekness* instructing those who oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them *repentance* to the acknowledging of the truth."

The humble servant of Christ preaches the doctrine which is revealed in the scriptures. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." That is, we are not qualified to *invent* or *originate* such a system of religion as we preach; we only proclaim what God has been pleased to *reveal* by his spirit. If such profession of dependence on God for a revelation of his will, were becoming in men who were extraordinarily qualified, how extremely arrogant would it be in us, who can claim no such qualifications, not to be satisfied with that revelation, as found in the New Testament. Those who neglect this Volume, and repair to mere human productions,—to the writings of great and learned men, who have been at the trouble of inventing schemes of their own, that they may find a Body of divinity, are as unfortunate as the female Seekers were, who, had they succeeded in their attempts, would have found nothing but the *dead body* of their Lord; and to whom the angel said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? The Lord is not here, he is risen." But the language of the humble is,—"Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." These words express the feelings and sentiments of the humble heart, renewed by the grace or favor of the

Lord; and I would remind you, that those who are so favored of God as to be called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, must needs be experimental, sober, devout, prayerful men.

But, do you ask, whether *they* will not become proud, arrogant and dogmatical, whose labor it is to disseminate the invaluable riches of salvation to a lost and perishing world? Our reply is, Be not hasty in forming an opinion; be patient till you have heard the whole testimony, and then judge ye. You should consider that the man who is properly inducted into this sacred office, will be the more humble and meek, the more he realizes his responsibility to God, for having employed him in dispensing to others, the riches of his mercy. His humbling declaration is, "I am debtor both to the cultivated and uncultivated, to the wise and to the unwise; so as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to "every creature; for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." And think you, kind friends, that such an one will become proud, dictatorial and illiberal? What! *proud* of being a *debtor* to all men; the high and the low, rich and poor, bond and free; in being subject to draughts for the unsearchable riches of Christ, from the penurious and the affluent, the begger and the king? No; but rather, how lowly, how humble must be the man, who realizes that he owes his talents, qualifications, and best services to those for whose final salvation, our glorious Master lived, labored, suffered, died, arose and ascended on high?

2. **BENEVOLENCE** and *zeal* are assential characteristics in the ministers of truth. If an apostle hath said of disciples or christians in general, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have *love* one towards another," how important it is that *teachers* should possess real love or benevolence. Though they speak with tongues of the eloquent,

and the fervor of angels, and have not charity or love, they would be as the sounding brass or the tinkling cymbal. If destitute of *Christian benevolence*, they might be denominated any thing else, rather than *Christian* ministers. By what authority do men assume the patronymic name of *Jesus*, whose whole life was demonstrative of pure, universal, impartial benevolence, unless according to their measure, they possess the same divine principle.—A proper degree of zeal and fervor are also requisite to the faithful discharge of the ministerial duties. On the one hand, zeal stimulates the principle of love ; and on the other, benevolence chastens and regulates the activity of zeal. A zeal, even for God, which is not dictated by love, arising from a knowledge of his true character, is dangerous in the extreme. If we are allowed to accommodate scripture to such cases, we might exclaim, “The *zeal* of thine house hath eaten me up.” It becomes *voracious* ; and instead of *feeding* the flock, it *devours*. When the heat of a false zeal becomes intense, its effects may be anticipated from the desire which accompanies it, —Lord, shall we not call down fire from heaven and consume our opposers ? These remarks are not made to discountenance divine ardor ; but to expose the folly of clerical madness, under the profession of zeal, for the glory of God. When preachers have as much love and knowledge, as zeal, we care not how zealous they are. Had the preacher an opportunity of saving from danger and destruction, of rescuing from guilt and sufferings, of restoring to holiness and heaven,—we should rejoice to see him rush between the intended victim and the destroyer ; or wrapping himself in the indestructible wing of an angel, dive to “the lowest hell,” (to use David’s words) and seizing the unhappy sufferer, bear him in the strong arms of love, to the regions of glory.

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3. Suitable *ability*, and *decision* of character are necessary qualifications in christian ministers.— Being well instructed in the principles of the gospel, they should be prepared to say with the apostle ; “ Who also hath made *us able ministers* of the New Testament.” Not, however, that in speaking of this *ability*, St. Paul had the imprudence to boast of natural talents, or scientific acquirements ; because when speaking of sterling ability and philosophical knowledge, without the aid of revelation, he declared, that the world by wisdom knew not God ; and again, “ Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools ; and changed the glory of the incorruptible, God, into an image made like corruptible man.” He spoke not with the excellency of speech, or in the enticing words which man’s wisdom teacheth. The ability to which we allude, consists in, “ being mighty in the scriptures,” and in the doctrine and power of Christ. Able to teach, exhort, convince and overcome the opposers of the gospel. Our commission is, “ Go ye therefore and teach all nations. Be strong in the grace, that is, Christ Jesus ;—and be able to teach others also. Holding fast the faithful words as thou hast been taught, that thou mayest be able to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers.” Relying on this sterngth, we are certain of ultimate victory ; for “ The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand in the evil day ; and having

done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God : praying with all prayer and supplication in the spirit." Clad in this divine panoply, the herald of salvation goes forth, " determined to know nothing among the people, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." With dauntless fortitude he braves the storm of opposition, exclaiming,— " But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself; that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

4. *Uprightness* and *fideli**ty* or honesty and faithfulness, are indispensably requisite to qualify men for the gospel ministry. They should be prepared to say, in all good conscience ;— " Wherefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully ; but by manifestation of the truth, commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Nothing in the conduct of the ministers of Christ, is more lamentable, than dishonesty and prevarication. We speak with reference to the manner in which they dispense the riches of the gospel ; for we apprehend there are some, that use unfairness in stating, maintaining and defending the truth. It is quite enough for those who are yet in darkness, to advocate *error* by sophistry and prevarication ; but the servants of Jesus should be men of *honest hearts*, making an open, frank and full declaration of " the whole council of God."

Faithfulness, also, is a cardinal-virtue in a good minister.—“ Let a man so account of us as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful.” We should so discharge our duties, that when the hour of dissolution arrives, we can say with a venerable Soldier of the Cross.—“ I am ready to be offered ; the time of my departure is at hand : I have fought the good fight ; I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith : And henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness ; and, (blessed be God ! what is equally pleasing) *not for me only*, but for all those who love his appearing.” Enrapturing thought ! glorious contemplation !

“ There shall I wear a starry crown,
And triumph in almighty grace ;
While all the armies of the skies,
Join in my glorious Leader’s praise.”

II. *The fundamental principles of the New Testament doctrine*, come next under consideration.—“ The New Testament,” it may be premised, means, the new and glorious dispensation of the gospel ; as will be seen by examining the chapter from which our text is selected. The glory of the first dispensation, which came by Moses, and is by way of comparison, called “ the ministration of death,” was lost in the superior splendor of the revelation of eternal life through Jesus Christ, as the feeble rays of a taper are absorbed in the bright effulgence of the sun. The second dispensation embraced, substantially, the fulfilment of all the great and precious promises of God, and the glorious predictions of his evangelical prophets.

The words here rendered *New Testament*, might, with equal propriety, be translated *New Covenant*. If so rendered, *three* things would be presented for consideration ; viz. the *Author* of the Covenant ;—

the *beings* for whose good it was made, and the *Mediator* by whom the covenant was to be fulfilled. God alone is its author. He says, unconditionally,—"I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel." Peter declared, "Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant that God *made* with our fathers, saying, In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed;" which shows that God was the sole Maker of the covenant.

But should we apply the received translation, according to the common acceptation of words, the world would not be injured in the result. As a *Testament* or will signifies, the solemn act by which a *man* disposes of his property for the benefit of his heirs, the doctrine of the New Testament, will embrace, the moral character of God; the duties and character of man, and the mediatorial office of Jesus Christ. We say, the *moral character of God*; because since the *disposition* and character of a being are known, by his *will, purpose or determination*, it is evident that God's character is infinitely good, or diametrically the reverse; or that it is neither of these, but a character imperfectly good. To the law and the testimony then, let us appeal, that we may contemplate the infinite wisdom, benevolence and power of God, and adore him for the ineffable amiableness of his character, as learned from his will, pleasure or purpose in relation to his intelligent offspring.

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will."—Having *made known* the *mystery*? you inquire. But are we not told of God's *unrevealed*, *mysterious* or *secret will*? Why, then, do you say it is *made known*, and no longer a mystery? Recollect my friends, that I am not responsible for the unscriptual assertions of those to whom you allude. You are presented with naked truth, as revealed in *this Volume* of inspiration. The *will* of God is unambiguously expressed, as in letters of sun-beam;

and this is the record : “ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself ; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ ; both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. And he worketh all things, after the council of his own will.” As a written Testament or will is supposed to express the disposition and intention of its author, in words least liable to misconstruction, I conceive that no remarks need be offered, to explain the above language. The same apostle has emphatically styled this, “ the *good* and *acceptable*, and *perfect will of God.*” And what can be said to render it more explicit ? As well might I attempt to increase the beauty of the rose, improve the hues of the rain-bow, or add to the splendor of the sun.

But do I hear it asked with much seriousness ;— Is not God a *Sovereign* ? has he not a right to do as he will with his own ? Be it admitted, and it will only prove that we ought to be satisfied with the divine declaration of what God is disposed to do, by the use of means infallibly appointed. In addition to what we have just adduced, listen for a moment to the *Sovereign* voice of Heaven. “ Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth : for I am God and there is none else. The word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return ; that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength. And in this mountain *shall the Lord* of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things ;—and he will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory ; and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces ; and the

rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth : *for the Lord hath spoken it.*" Is there any thing in *this sovereignty* to which the benevolent heart can object ? Who will not rejoice, to learn that we have a universal Sovereign, Father and Saviour ? But when the glory of the incorruptible God, is changed into the image of a corrupt and cruel sovereign, we cannot wonder that liberal minds should shudder at the frightful representations of his sovereignty. O, how widely different, when in the light of revelation, a sovereign God is exhibited, an impartial, immutable Father !

Who in the exercise of his reason, would be alarmed on receiving information that the benevolent Author of all things, the Friend and Father of our spirits, had a *determinate purpose* in given existence to intelligent beings, and that every thing is systematically arranged in the natural and moral worlds, with special reference to that purpose ? Would it not afford serious grounds for terrific apprehensions, were we assured that God's work was *without system*, and his determinations as fickle and variable as ours ? Assure me that I have a Father in heaven, whose disposition is good, as his attributes are perfect, and *think you I will not rejoice and be grateful, that his determination, in regard to the final destination of man, is like Himself, eternal and unchangeable ?*

2. The next primary principle of doctrine relates to the character of man.—But on this point I shall speak with less freedom and confidence, than on many other parts of our general subject. For even the language of revelation is less definite or more difficult of application on this particular, than on many others. Though we admit that "the proper study of mankind is man; so much do we neglect this study, that each individual is an enigma to himself, and all around him equally enigmatical. I mean

that the actions of men are frequently at variance with their reason and sober judgment. How often is the conduct, a practical denial or refutation of the theory of one's profession? He admits maxims of morality and principles in religion, as the landmarks of his life and his hopes, and yet pursues a devious and eccentric course. These remarks are not only confirmed by daily observation and experience, but they are recorded in the sketches of human character, in the volume of revelation. So far as I have been acquainted with the writings of able, learned and pious men, there is no subject on which they have written more obscurely and unprofitably, than on the agency and *accountability* of man. Though they reason for a while, with much plausibility, they at length come to a point, which they must either evade, or declare it to be inscrutable.

But to be brief upon a subject, which can be better learned by consulting our own hearts and consciences, than by examining the ingenious speculations of uninspired men, let our thoughts be directed to our own accountability. We shall find ourselves accountable to God for the proper use of the abilities, capacities and privileges which we possess; and, therefore, may presume that the same is also true of others. *Capacity* for obeying, as well as *intellec-*tion to understand a requirement, seems to be indispensable to amenability. We might understand a command, which was perfectly arbitrary and unjust. A master might command his servant to alter the limitations of the ocean, and make its billows pause, short of the bounds, of which God said, "Thus far shalt thou come, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The sovereign might require his subjects to extinguish the stars and lessen the dimensions of the sun; but when there is *no capacity to obey*, as well as to understand, could they

justly be punished for not doing as required? Were they tortured, under the pretence of their having refused to obey their sovereign, could you so pervert terms as to call it punishment or correction, for sin? By this I would oppose, in a respectful manner, the notion advocated by some men, eminent for talents, acquirements and piety; the notion that man's *total inability* to obey God's law, is *consistent* with his *infinite criminality* for disobeying. Inability to do a command, is always excusable, unless produced by one's own misconduct, under more favorable circumstances. We must omit, however, in this place, an examination of many curious and fanciful things which are published, concerning the injury we sustained by the sin of those "who erst in Eden sung;" and endeavour to impress the solemn truth upon all your hearts, that where much is given, much will be required; and the servant who knows his master's will and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. That man possesses no agency, and is under no amenability, which will operate to prevent the accomplishment of God's original purpose, in giving him existence, is indisputable. This fact is rendered obvious from a variety of considerations. Taking a wide survey of the world, *all men are sinners*, none having exercised the talents which they possess, in undeviating obedience to the commands of God. The best of men are sinners, before sanctification and salvation through Christ. Was it not for the riches of divine mercy, no man could entertain any rational hopes of enjoying future life and immortality. Being weighed in the balance and found wanting, we will turn our attention to the last particulars under this proposition.

3. The *mediatorial* character of Jesus Christ. "For now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon bet-

ter promises. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." But as God is an infinitely perfect Being, the Father of lights, without variableness or shadow of turning, the mediator was ordained to bring man into a state of reconciliation with his Maker. Hence we are told that, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Jesus is the divine MEDIUM, through which Jehovah reveals his perfections to his offspring. In testimony of his Father's impartial benevolence, the mediator gave himself a ransom for all, and tasted death for every man. Therefore, we hold him forth in our ministry, as the universal Saviour of sinners. We repeat it,—*the Saviour of sinners*; for some have affected to understand us as teaching, that some men would finally be happy, without being saved from their sins. But we discard that sentiment as heartily, as do others. It is matter of rejoicing that I have so favorable an opportunity of correcting, thus publickly, that reprehensible mistake. Let this be inscribed on the breastplate of every minister of truth,—" He shall bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. His name shall be called Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins. We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

To accomplish the great work of salvation, Jesus officiates as the Restorer or Regenerator of the human family. "Not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us; by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Our conversation (or citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, by the working of his power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself." And the apostle, in employing different lan-

guage to express the same glorious work, represents the Saviour as creating all things, which are in heaven and in earth. He that sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Hence we can no more deny the scripture account of regeneration, and maintain the doctrine of universal grace, than we can deny the mediatorial character of Jesus, and yet be consistent advocates for his religion.

Let the opposers of truth continue to assert that we undervalue the mediation of the Saviour, and degrade his character, in the judgment of candor and good sense. Nothing can be more unreasonable and unjust. We maintain that through him, life and immortality are brought to light; that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. We ascribe to him a name and dignity, above all, God excepted. In the language of scripture, we hold him to be "*greater* than Jonah"—"*greater* than Solomon,"—made *better* than the angels." If there are any, who are desirous of knowing, *how much* greater he is than men and angels; we reply,—Since ~~no~~ such curious question is proposed and answered, in the scriptures, we shall decline offering an opinion, till we have some express revelation upon the subject. At present we can only say that so great, so mighty and so victorious is the Lord Jesus, that all kings shall prostrate themselves before him, all nations cheerfully serve him, and all his enemies become subject to his reign, that God may be **ALL IN ALL**.

III. *The tendency of this doctrine will be now briefly considered.*—That any system of sentiments, however correct, may be abused by its professors, we apprehend no one will deny. This may be inferred from this clause of the text,—"the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Those words, it is true, relate primarily to the two dispensations

or covenants; but they admit of another application. The *letter* of a doctrine is one thing; its *spirit* another. The one is but the sign or name; the other the thing signified. There is a word which signifies the Sun of day; that great luminary whose countless beams enlighten, animate and bless our earth. But will the letter, the word, *sun*, dispel the darkness of night, and answer the glorious purposes for which the thing signified was intended? The name is the shadow, not the substance. This is true of universal benevolence. *Benevolence*, we all admit, is a charming word; and *universal* is not unpleasant. Even the phrase, *universal benevolence*, is musical, and agreeable to the ear of all, excepting bigots and fanatics. But I must press it upon your consideration, with all my feeble powers, that we should embrace the substance, instead of the shadow. It is not very difficult to *profess* the doctrine of universal benevolence, but alas! how few there are who possess it in spirit. The letter alone killeth; but the spirit giveth life and peace. On this point we may avail ourselves of the testimony of our opposers; for even *they* admit that were professors of our doctrine influenced by its spirit, they would be christians indeed and in truth, and their religion would be of the highest practical utility. This testimony leads the mind to a very interesting conclusion; it is, that our opposers ought to possess the *spirit of our doctrine*, and if they will retain any part, the *letter* of their own. In proportion as a doctrine opposes ours, therefore, it is cause for rejoicing to the world, that its professors are no more under the influence of its spirit. This must be evident, since did their creed contain *no* benevolence at all, but its opposite, their doctrine would be highly pernicious, if operative upon the conduct. While we lament that the advocates for universal love, are not constantly

actuated by the spirit of their profession, let us rejoice that we can say to the credit of our violent opposers, that, they have at this day, but little of the *power or spirit* of their doctrine, to what the founder of their sect had, so far as their creed opposes *universal benevolence*.

The natural tendency therefore of this doctrine of truth is, to produce the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and temperance. It translates from darkness to light, and from bondage to liberty. It emancipates the soul from the tyranny of superstition, the servitude of sin, and the terrors of false apprehensions. By the redeeming efficacy of invincible truth, the whole creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and be translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

When this doctrine is correctly taught and understandingly embraced, and becomes influential upon the heart, it produces supreme reverence towards God, unwavering confidence in the divine mission of Jesus, and Christian kindness towards our fellow beings. It leads us to recognize all men as the offspring of God, and to rejoice in the belief that they are all destined to become his children in a peculiar and spiritual sense. "The Spirit beareth witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. For we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

But the tendency of our doctrine is manifest, from the heavenly consolation which it affords the believer, when he stands by the bed-side of the dying, and beholds the sweat of death collecting upon the pallid face. Then it is that this angel of

mercy, this divine witness in the soul, constrains him to judge "that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again." In Jesus he beholds the resurrection and the life of his redeemed family.

Yes, my friends and brethren, if you heartily embrace the system of doctrine which I have attempted to exhibit, and conform your lives to its spirituality and power, you will be constantly attended by a celestial companion, who will sustain you under embarrassments, comfort you in afflictions, smooth as with the soft hand of mercy the pillow of death, and enable you to triumph, through faith and hope, over the terrors of death and the grave. Then shall you be able to declare to an unbelieving world, that the doctrine of universal benevolence is of incalculable value in the present life, and that it opens to the eye of faith, the portals of glory and immortality in futurity.

And O ! may God in mercy grant that both speaker and hearer may, from this eventful hour, be prepared to say,

"Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barb'rous climes,
Rivers unknown to song, where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles, 'tis nought to me :
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in *the city* full !
And where He vital breathes, there must be joy.
When e'en at last the solemn hour shall come,
To wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey ; there, with new powers,
Will rising wonders sing : I cannot go
Where Universal Love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns ;
From *seeming evil* still educating *good*,
And *better* thence again, and *better* still,
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him, in light ineffable !
Come then, expressive silence, muse His praise."

I had concluded to dispense with the addresses which, according to the usual custom, would follow the discourse on this occasion ; believing I should be excused by the audience, not only on account of the services which are yet to be performed, but also from a consideration of the affinity existing between myself and the Pastor elect of this Church and Society. But urged by sentiments and feelings not easily suppressed, I must so far forego my resolution, as to congratulate you, My BROTHER—a brother in every endearing and sacred use of the term—on your removal to this place, where a promising and extensive field for usefulness is open before you. Having labored for many years with encouraging success in different parts of the Lord's heritage, with what energy and zeal will you now renew your exertions to write, as with the pen of love, the principles of our holy religion upon the hearts of all who attend your ministry. Though you are my senior brother in years, in knowledge, and evangelical labors, may I remind you of the importance of studying the scriptures daily, that you may show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth ? Consider the solemn responsibility under which you act ; and not only bear in mind the *sacred place* which you occupy, but that you speak in the name and in the presence of the King of Kings. When you stand in the footsteps of the venerable departed MURRAY, (and who knows but that his ghost is now bending from his seat in glory, to witness, with approving smiles, the interesting transactions of this occasion ?) as you contemplate his ascension to bliss, wrap yourself, as in the mantle of the Elijah of our Israel, exclaiming, “ My father ! my father ! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.”

Yes, dear brother ; and amidst the faithful dis-

charge of your duties, should you be revisited with affliction, agonizing for respiration, be assured you will have, in your behalf, my fervent prayers and those of all your brethren in the gospel, but especially of the dear people of your charge, that "fanned by some angel's purple wing," your lungs may freely inhale this vital atmosphere, till, by the death-warrant from on high, you are called from your social and religious obligations on earth to enjoy the full fruition of redeeming grace in heaven.

This CHURCH AND SOCIETY will accept a hearty and cheerful salutation from one whose inmost soul rejoices in their prosperity. Suffer me to felicitate you, BRETHREN of like precious faith, that you are again to be favored with the stated ministry of the word. With a commendable zeal and unanimity you have concentrated your efforts for this noble purpose; and God be praised that he has smiled upon your exertions. Let me remind you that "Union is strength;" and that the maxim is true in religious as well as in other associations of men,—"United we stand; divided we fall." Bear constantly in mind the practical part of our religion; denying ungodliness and all unholy desires; living soberly, righteously and godly in *the present world*. But as these things will be exhibited before you on each returning sabbath, and in parochial visits, I need not indulge in exhortation; and yet *propriety*, you must be sensible, forbids my expressing an opinion, with reference to the manner in which it will be done by the servant of Jesus whom you have chosen to feed you with the bread of life.

Therefore, imploring upon both pastor and people the richest blessings of Heaven, I must take my leave of you, and of this Bethel of the Lord, by saying, from my heart,

May PEACE attend thy gate,
 And joy within thee wait,
 To bless the soul of ev'ry guest ;
 THE MAN that seeks thy peace,
 And wishes thine increase,
 A thousand blessings on HIM rest.
 My tongue repeats her vows ;
 PEACE to this sacred house ;
 For here my FRIENDS AND BRETHREN dwell :
 And since my glorious GOD
 Makes this his blest abode,
 MY SOUL SHALL EVER LOVE THEE WELL !

CHARGE.

BY THE REV. THOMAS JONES, GLOUCESTER.

MY BROTHER—The doctrine, morals, and predictions contained in this book we esteem divine and holy, because originally given by the miraculous or supernatural inspiration of God. So we read (2 Pet. i. 20.) For the prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The operative energy of God, or God in his operative energy ! For energy without an agent is as impossible as sunshine without a sun. So we say, the prophets were inspired or moved of God to preach or write doctrine, to give precepts, to foretel things to come.

How such inspiration was communicated to the prophets is an arcanum beyond us. For we of this day have no experience of supernatural inspiration. Those who sincerely think they have felt it, at some times doubt of it. But the prophets never doubted of the manifestations God gave them.—The inspiration gave them a certainty beyond the possibility of doubt.

We may conjecture that such an inspiration was given the prophets, by the intelligent Omnipresent Spirit, JEHOVAN, possessing their spirits, and giving them mental vision in his vision. But this power

was dealt out by measure unto them. They were like other men, except when the spirit of God came upon them. But not so "the Man Christ Jesus." —The "only begotten Son of God." He had not the Spirit by measure, but plenary and perpetual! So said an Apostle, "In him dwelleth all the the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

But as He who created the elements, and founded the laws of nature, still supports and preserves them, as the fountain of power; "So glows in the stars, warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze; so also, He operates still ordinarily or by means, upon mankind, morally. Revelation is the lamp, which contains the fire of divine love, which enlightens and moves the Soul to devotion. This holy book contains doctrine we never could have known without a revelation from Heaven.—The doctrine of eternal life;—existence in an incorruptible, innocent state.

So, also, the moral precepts to direct our conduct, upon earth, may be equally ascribed to God, the source of moral order. In vain is it to say, in objection to a supernatural revelation from God; as mankind by reason, now approve of the doctrine and morals of the Scriptures, they may have been originally, the result of the free exercise of human reason, and not of God supernaturally; but only ordinarily, as God is the Creator of man, and the founder of nature.

To this objection I will only say here; we have by the constitution of God, that wonderful faculty, sight, in us; but notwithstanding, no man ever would have seen an object without light, which is not in us, but shines upon us: but in the light, we see with pleasure all things around us. So also, the eye of reason, delights with rapture in what God hath revealed—In what we behold in the light of divine revelation.

This Book, which contains prophecy of things which have been fulfilled, are now fulfilling, and which shall be fulfilled: and doctrine, even the doctrine of eternal

grace in the unchangeable God, towards all mankind his common offspring, manifested in the one Mediator —Lord of all. And morals, to teach us our duty as rational beings, having such a glorious hope: this Book, I, as one of the Council delegated by this Society, deliver to you, my Brother, according to our custom; hereby expressing the confidence of the Society in you, that you are worthy to take this Book as their Instructor, and able to preach to them its doctrine, and to inculcate its morals, as their Teacher and Pastor.—That you will guide them by it, and be governed by it yourself. They say by this act; thou art learned and skilful in the word of righteousness, instruct thou us to profit for God.

My Brother, in this location, providence hath given you a wide field for labour. You will, here, have many to preach to, the unsearchable riches of Christ. They will hang with eager ears upon your words; they will triumph in the doctrine of free grace; and I hope will not be forgetful hearers, but doers of the word. I wish you prosperity in the name of the Lord. But here also, you will have many to visit in distress and affliction, and to see many of your friends close their eyes upon time. In the dismal valley of death you must teach them to fear no evil. You must comfort them in their affliction. For our Lord said to the sorrowful, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, because I live ye shall live also.”

Your own understanding, and the unction of the theme you preach, will guide you into all truth, and give you strength of mind according to your day of trial.

If, my Brother, you look back upon the past, and contemplate the future therefrom, you will feel joyful confidence, that he that hath begun the good work of free grace, by his gospel, in this city, will continue by his providence to carry it on.

About half a century ago, a Stranger, our deceased brother John Murray, was moved to publish God's Universal Grace and Salvation in this City. How new then was the theme to the ears of them that heard him! Some heard it gladly, some thought it blasphemy.

Not that the doctrine was not known from the Apostolic age to that period. Many before then had written on it. And some since of more modern time, of the most learned of their day, have discussed and approved, and also written on it.

Some in this land believed it in secret, but saw it not their duty, or had not strength of mind to publish it. Perhaps, some felt afraid to risque its publication, having much to lose if the majority should oppose it. So God employed witnesses lighter clad, who had not a store of wordly honour in the Church to lose; and sent them forth with a "sling" and a smooth stone, and Goliah fell!—Babylon is fallen! Now the doctrine of free universal grace soars high, and like a mighty Angel flies through the midst of Heaven, and speaks to the earth.

We pray, my Friend and Brother, that you may be able to lay such a foundation here, for divine truth, in the minds of the rising generation, that there may be as many swarms from this place, where the honey comb is filled with sweetness, from the flowers of the Bible, when you shall have exchanged earth for Heaven, as took place after the FLIGHT of the first Pastor of this Society. It really appears as if we lived at the opening of that long predicted day, when the light of the Sun shall be seven fold, as the light of seven days; in the height of which day, the glory of the Lord is to be revealed, and all flesh is to see it together. I would address myself to this respected Church and Congregation; my Friends in the Lord Jesus. Many of your pillars have fallen by death, since I first knew you; others have removed to

support new formed and distinct Bodies, in the one faith of free, Universal Grace. Those who have bidding us adieu upon earth, of our old friends, we most fully believe, we shall meet again, with a joyful hail of welcome, upon the heavenly plain, where infirmity and death shall be no more.

But now your ranks appear to be well filled up, and filling. This day my Friends you enter upon a new establishment, or rather you enter anew, upon your established franchise as a society, by settling this Brother your overseer in the Lord. We rejoice with you in the event. We confidently commit him to your care as a preacher of righteousness. Strengthen ye his hands in the Lord.

The Work of the Ministry is arduous to men in earthly tabernacles, subject to the passions of other men. From your Pastor Elect, you will always expect bowels of compassion and mercies ; and it will be always his interest to cherish the mind which was in Christ Jesus. But in order to this end, my beloved Friends, you must make his mind, as a united Body, as easy as possible, by your living in Friendship among yourselves ; by attending his Ministry, and seeking to profit thereby ; by framing your morals by the directory of the gospel, for your own and the general happiness of your body, and of your race ; by accustoming the younger branches of your families to attend with you on his Ministry ; that they may be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Those of you who are fully persuaded in your own minds of the truth of the Christian Faith, as maintained in the New Testament, and feel a wish to profess it openly before men, by the highest mode here used to make such a profession ; the way is easy and the burden light. And if we do indeed believe with the heart unto righteousness, why should we not make confession with the mouth unto Salvation ?

We in this day of civil and religious freedom, expose ourselves to no persecution by professing ourselves Christians ;—By professing *our* Lord, the Lord of *all*. Even the persecution of the tongue in this Country, in this day of light, when unruly, can effect but little ; and the day is fast approaching when all iniquity shall stop her mouth. God in his providence hath given us the banner of freedom, and under it truth shall flourish.

My Friends, may you be able to walk circumspectly, worthy of your high calling in Christ Jesus—*our* Lord, and Lord of *all*, Amen.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY THE REV. HOSEA BALLOU.

BROTHER STREETER,—It has fallen to my lot, on this solemn, interesting, and joyful occasion, to present you with the right hand of fellowship ; in the performance of which I act as the agent, and in behalf of the present Installing Council and the United Churches and Societies constituting the general convention of Universalists.

The solemnity of this rite is realized by duly considering that the fellowship it expresses recognizes the grace, mercy, and peace richly communicated from the Father of our Spirits, through a blessed mediator, to a redeemed world ; and openly professes to refer to Him, who knows our thoughts, for the sincerity of our hearts in reciprocating, in this public manner, this most sacred pledge of our mutual esteem, brotherly love, and christian fellowship. On creatures of our imperfections, who are liable to be deceived by our own hearts, these considerations impose the necessity of a most scrupulous and cautious inspection of all that is within, lest some mental reservation, or evasion of mind should, though not re-

alised by ourselves and unknown to angels and men, who witness the solemn act, present us painted hypocrites to that all-seeing eye, from which nothing is hid; and foster a latent germ which may grow to a "root of bitterness."

This ceremony, simple in itself, is extensively interesting as it relates to the circumstances with which it is connected. The solemn, fervent, and impressive prayer, just offered to the throne of Heaven, which installs you the Pastor of the first Universalist Church and Society in this City; the able, energetic, and appropriate charge which you have just received, faithfully to discharge all the duties of the sacred office, together with the other services of the occasion, all tend to interest the feelings of all the friends of true religion, in the purity and permanency of the fellowship to be maintained and enjoyed between this Church and Congregation, and their Pastor, this day installed over them in the Lord; between them, yourself, and the numerous branches of our general convention, and the whole fraternity of Ministering Brethren, who profess like precious faith in the Saviour of all men.

This fellowship, to which nothing can be paramount, does not consist in refined theories of doctrine, nor in nicely calculated systems of discipline, but in that celestial charity which vaunteth not herself, seeketh not her own, endureth, believeth, and hopeth all things, and which never faileth. Dews more precious than those of Herman, and the dews that descended on the mountains of Zion, are shed from the pure regions of divine charity, to refresh and bless the hearts of Brethren, who dwell together in unity, with life everlasting.

Fellowship on this occasion, is rendered peculiarly interesting, as it associates many Churches and Societies in a happy union with this Church and Society, which they regarded, as the Apostle speaks of Sarah,

as "the mother of us all;" and as Deborah, who "arose a mother in Israel."

These reflections recal seasons which are past, when, in a lonely condition, this church and Society, led by the hand of our faithful departed brother, who planted this *vine* and watered it with the dews of grace, endured the storm of opposition, which was characterized with all those qualities, which are dishonorable to religion and degrading to man. But the Lord had compassion ; He comforted the afflicted ; He laid her stones with fair colours and her foundation with Saphires ; He made her windows of Agates, her gates of carbuncles, and all her borders of pleasant stones. Her children were taught of the Lord, and great was their peace. A little one became a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.

Pressed with these weighty considerations, permit me, my dear brother, to say, that many hands are presented in the hand you hold, and we all trust that in yours we hold that of this church and Society, which we not only love, but venerate and respect.

Brother Streeter, I claim the indulgence to say, that our long and happy acquaintance, my knowledge of your former faithfulness and successful labours in the ministry render your proximity to me peculiarly welcome, and strengthen my hopes, that our fervent prayers and labours may be mutual and successful in advancing the Redeemer's cause in this City. And may our fellowship be with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.

ERRATUM.

On page 7, line 6th from the bottom, for *an apostle*, read *Christ*.
There are some other errors of small importance, which the reader will excuse.





